

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below. Following entry of these amendments, the following claims are pending in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A fusion protein comprising:

(a) a mammalian surfactant protein precursor lacking its C-terminal propeptide, and

(b) a mammalian plasminogen activator,

wherein the surfactant protein precursor is fused at its C-terminus to the N-terminus of the plasminogen activator, ~~and~~ wherein the mammalian surfactant protein is surfactant protein B (SP-B), and wherein the fusion protein retains the biological activities of the surfactant protein and the plasminogen activator.

2. (Original) The fusion protein of claim 1 wherein one of the protein components (a) or (b) is a human protein.

3. (Original) The fusion protein of claim 1, wherein both protein components (a) and (b) are human proteins.

4. (Cancelled).

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently amended) A fusion protein comprising:

(a) a mature mammalian surfactant protein, and

(b) a mammalian plasminogen activator,

wherein the mature surfactant protein is fused at its C-terminus or its N-terminus to the N-terminus or the C-terminus of the plasminogen activator, respectively, wherein the surfactant protein is selected from the group consisting of surfactant protein B (SP-B) and surfactant protein C (SP-C), and wherein the fusion protein retains the biological activities of the surfactant protein and the plasminogen activator.

7. (Original) The fusion protein of claim 6, wherein one of the protein components (a) or (b) is a human protein.
8. (Original) The fusion protein of claim 6, wherein both protein components (a) and (b) are human proteins.
9. (Cancelled).
10. (Original) The fusion protein of claim 6, wherein the mature surfactant protein is surfactant protein B (SP-B).
11. (Original) A fusion protein of claim 1, wherein the mammalian plasminogen activator is selected from the group consisting of high molecular weight two-chain urokinase-plasminogen activator (HMW-u-PA), low molecular weight two-chain u-PA (LMW-u-PA), low molecular weight u-PA B-chain, recombinant single-chain u-PA (r-scu-PA), tissue-plasminogen activator (t-PA), recombinant t-PA (rt-PA), its variants r-PA, n-PA, and TNK-t-PA, and catalytically active mutants of the plasminogen activator.
12. (Original) The fusion protein according to claim 1 comprising the surfactant protein B (SPB) precursor N-terminally fused to the low molecular weight two-chain u-PA (LMW-u-PA), as shown in SEQ ID NO: 19 and SEQ ID NO: 20, respectively.
13. (Original) The fusion protein according to claim 6 comprising the mature surfactant protein B (SP-B) fused to the low molecular weight two-chain u-PA (LMW-u-PA), as shown in SEQ ID NO: 25 and SEQ ED NO: 26, respectively.
14. (Original) The fusion protein of claim 1, further comprising one or more protein or peptide affinity tag tags at its positions selected from the N-terminus of the fusion protein, the C-terminus of the fusion protein, and both the N-terminus and C-terminus of the fusion protein.
15. (Currently amended) A nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 1.
16. (Previously presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6 or SEQ ID NO: 7.

17. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID No: 12~~ SEQ ID NO: 12 or SEQ ID NO: 13.
18. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 15, wherein the nucleic acid molecule is operably linked to a regulatory sequence to allow expression of the nucleic acid molecule.
19. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule according to claim 18, wherein the regulatory sequence comprises a promoter sequence and a transcription termination sequence.
20. (Original) A vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of claim 15.
21. (Currently amended) A host cell containing ~~a~~ the nucleic acid molecule of claim 15.
22. (Currently amended) A method for production of ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 1, comprising:

introducing a nucleic acid molecule encoding the fusion protein into a suitable vector, and

introducing the recombinant vector ~~obtained in (a)~~ into a suitable host cell or into a suitable cell extract under conditions suitable for the expression of said nucleic acid molecule encoding the fusion protein, thereby producing the fusion protein.
23. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 1.
24. (Canceled).
25. (Canceled).
26. (Canceled).
27. (Currently amended) A method of ~~prevention and/or~~ treatment of inflammatory and interstitial lung diseases, comprising administering ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 1 to a mammal at a dose sufficient to ~~prevent and/or~~ treat the disease.
28. (Original) The method according to claim 27, wherein the fusion protein is administered to a mammal by an administration selected from the group consisting of parenteral administration, non-parenteral (enteral) administration, and topical administration.

29. (Original) The method according to claim 28, wherein parenteral administration is by aerosol administration or intratracheal instillation.

30. (Previously presented) The fusion protein of claim 6, wherein the mammalian plasminogen activator is selected from the group consisting of high molecular weight two-chain urokinase-plasminogen activator (HMW-u-PA), low molecular weight two-chain u-PA (LMW-u-PA), low molecular weight u-PA B-chain, recombinant single-chain u-PA (r-sc-u-PA), tissue plasminogen activator (t-PA), recombinant t-PA (rt-PA), its variants r-PA, n-PA, and TNK-t-PA, and catalytically active mutants of the plasminogen activator.

31. (Currently amended) A nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 6.

32. (Currently amended) A method for production of ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 6, comprising:

introducing a nucleic acid molecule encoding the fusion protein into a suitable vector, and

introducing the recombinant vector ~~obtained in (a)~~ into a suitable host cell or into a suitable cell extract under conditions suitable for the expression of said nucleic acid molecule encoding the fusion protein, thereby producing the fusion protein.

33. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 6.

34. (Currently amended) A method of ~~prevention and/or~~ treatment of inflammatory and interstitial lung diseases, comprising administering ~~a~~ the fusion protein of claim 6 to a mammal at a dose sufficient to ~~prevent and/or~~ treat the disease.